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LETTER DATED 14 MARCH 1996 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF YUGOSLAVIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit, enclosed herewith, the Press Release on the talks between His Excellency Mr. Milan Milutinović, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and His Excellency Mr. Mate Granić, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the Republic of Croatia, held on 11 March 1996 in Zagreb.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Vladislav JOVANOVIĆ
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex

Press release on the talks between the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Yugoslavia and the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Croatia, held on 11 March 1996 in Zagreb

The Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Milan Milutinović, and the Vice Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the Republic of Croatia, Mate Granić, conducted wide-ranging talks in Zagreb today on the questions of interest for the promotion of the peace process and for normalization of relations. The visit was a continuation of contacts and political dialogue conducted during the recent visit of Foreign Minister Granić to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

In the talks, conducted in a constructive atmosphere, the two sides expressed interest and readiness to proceed towards a full normalization of relations, well aware of the importance that this has for the further consolidation of the peace process, for peace and stability in the region.

The two sides expressed readiness for cooperation between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Croatia with other international partners in the realization of the Peace Agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the Basic Agreement on the Srem-Baranja region. It was assessed that it is most important to speed up the implementation of the civilian aspects of the Peace Agreement for Bosnia and, in particular, to ensure as soon as possible the conditions for holding free and democratic elections as envisaged by the established timetable. It was also pointed out that it was important to begin the speedy economic recovery and reconstruction of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which has not only economic but also political importance.

The two sides voiced full respect for the principle of equal treatment of all sides in the process of the implementation of the Peace Agreement. The recovery and reconstruction of the war-devastated areas, the creation of conditions for a normal life of people and the return of refugees will render a powerful contribution to peace if they are realized without political conditions and with equal treatment of all sides. As far as the Srem-Baranja region is concerned, it was pointed out that it was necessary to implement the Basic Agreement of 12 November 1995 and Security Council resolution 1037 (1996) of 15 January 1996 fully and consistently. It was underlined that it was important to complete the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES) as soon as possible and to begin the functioning of the Transitional Administration as a guarantor of an unimpeded evolvement of the transitional period and the equality of all inhabitants of the region. Both sides rendered their full support to the United Nations Transitional Administration and its Administrator, Jean-Jacques Klein.

The question of Prevlaka was also considered, as well as the egress of the Republic of Srpska to the sea. The Yugoslav side voiced its view that these outstanding issues should be resolved in the spirit of good-neighbourly relations and on the basis of previous agreements. Pending a final solution,

i.e., until the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Croatia reach an agreement, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1038 (1996) of 15 January 1996, on a solution which would resolve their differences related to the problem of Prevlaka peacefully, the United Nations security regime, established by the joint declarations of the President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the President of the Republic of Croatia of 30 September and 20 October 1992 and Security Council resolution 779 (1992) of 6 October 1992, will continue in force.

A number of agreements were reached in the talks which, paying due respect to mutual interests, resolve important concrete questions. Agreements were signed on the reopening of the oil pipeline, resumption of rail and air traffic and the establishment of telecommunication links and some postal services. It was agreed in principle to reopen the Belgrade-Zagreb motorway, the modalities of the realization of this agreement to be worked out in detail in the very near future.

It was agreed to expand the competence of the Bureau of the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in Zagreb and the Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia in Belgrade for the purpose of carrying out certain consular functions. In this way the two sides have met the needs of everyday life and the interests of the citizens of both sides, in particular a great number of Serbian refugees in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the solution of their status and other questions. The agreements reached are based on international conventions and customs and, no doubt, provide a new quality to the competence of the missions of the two Governments in Belgrade and Zagreb, even though this does not prejudice the question of the formal normalization of relations between the two countries.

As far as other open questions are concerned, the two sides reiterated their readiness to continue expert negotiations in order to reach mutually acceptable solutions as soon as possible.

The Yugoslav side pledged its support for a full protection of the human and civil rights of Serbs in Croatia. In particular, it stressed the need to create conditions for an unimpeded and safe return of all Serbian expellees and refugees from Krajina and Western Slavonia. The principle of free will and the choice of residence for all refugees must be universally respected. Particular emphasis was placed on guaranteeing the rights of Serbian expellees and refugees, as well as of the citizens of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia possessing property in the territory of Croatia, to dispose of their property. The Yugoslav side handed over an aide mémoire containing proposals to resolve this very important question.

The activities and concrete results of the work of the Commissions of the two Governments on humanitarian issues and missing persons achieved up to now have been assessed as positive and the continuation of their work without politicizing and on the agreed basis was supported. An agreed Protocol on the further cooperation of the Commissions will be signed soon.

Participating in the talks were the Federal Minister for Transport and Communications, Dr. Zoran R. Vujović, and senior officials of the Federal

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and, on the Croatian side, Zeljko Luzaveć, Minister of Shipping, Transport and Communications of the Republic of Croatia and senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Croatia.

The Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Milan Milutinović, was also received by the President of the Republic of Croatia, Dr. Franjo Tudjman. Their talks covered the basic aspects of Yugoslav-Croatian relations at this moment in time. It was confirmed that these relations were of great importance for the further progress of the peace process and the consolidation of peace and security in the region. It was mutually noted that, in the interest of the future and good-neighbourliness, the two sides should invest greater efforts in building mutual confidence and in resolving outstanding issues of common interest through agreements.

During his visit to Zagreb, the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs, Milan Milutinović, received in the Bureau of the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia the representatives of Serbs in Croatia and conducted with them lengthy and meaningful talks.